

and tell. I have listened to the President's commitment to health care reform. I have listened to the Democratic leadership's commitment to health care reform. And I have spent hours listening to constituents through town hall meetings in August and traveling throughout the district. As they speak about jobs, I want us to be very clear.

□ 1230

Every time I am in the district, someone says, are you going to get health care reform passed?

This is real meat and potatoes. This is about premiums that go up about \$1,400 to \$2,500 a year on a family of four. This is about 36 million to 40 million who are now uninsured. This is about working people who are uninsured. This is about families whose children have asthma or respiratory illnesses or preexisting conditions and are not able to get insurance because of birth defects or other illnesses that their children are born with, a preexisting disease. And presently, you cannot get insurance if you have a preexisting disease.

This is, likewise, about the non-competitive atmosphere that health carriers live in and that we suffer under. And you know what?

Before we began discussing this health care reform, we accepted it as the norm. We didn't think anything of it. In Alabama, one insurance company in the entire State. In a State like Texas, only three insurance companies. That is not competition. That is, you take me the way I want you to take me, and if you don't like it, move on.

That's the kind of atmosphere that health care insurance companies live in. They tell us, move on. Preexisting disease, move on. You can't pay your premiums, move on. You're in the hospital and we don't want to pay it, get out. That's what atmosphere Americans are living in.

And I realize that those who have insurance that they like, they don't see these horror stories of people dying because they don't have insurance. And I want the people who have insurance to keep their insurance. But 45,000 people die every year because they don't have health insurance.

So yesterday's meeting was a serious meeting, because the bottom line of it was, we're listening and we're open, but we have to move on because we're losing people's lives.

And so this preexisting disease will be eliminated. Premiums will go down. We'll save billions of dollars because of the health care reform process.

At the same time, I want us to do good. I want to make sure that we save physician-owned hospitals. Many of you probably have been patients in physician-owned hospitals, where doctors have come back in and purchased failing hospitals by a small percentage of ownership, where their name is on the line, where they want high quality hospitals like the 40-plus that are in the State of Texas, like Doctors Hospital, like St. Joseph's Hospital, like

the hospitals down in the Valley, where individuals who are paying the amount of money can count on doctors being there who care. And so I want this health insurance reform not to close down those hospitals and eliminate those employees who are there.

We can do a lot of good, and we must pass health care reform. We have to already recognize that we've passed the antitrust exemption so that you can have more competition in these States. We did that this past week. That's a good thing.

But we've got to make sure that we increase CHIPS for our children, Children's Health Insurance Program, protect Medicare and Medicaid, and open the floodgates for Americans who work and have dignity to have dignity when they are sick. The last thing you want to do is to be on your sickbed and to lose your house, your car, your ability to support yourself while you're losing your job because you're sick.

So I simply say that it is time now for the wake-up call to go out amongst all of those who care. America needs to wake up. When America demands, this legislative body, this People's House acts.

And so I thank the President for transparency yesterday. I thank the Democratic leadership for transparency. I thank my friends on the other side of the aisle for attending and engaging.

But after all is said and done, there will still be 45,000 people that are dying every year because they don't have insurance.

Mr. Speaker, the call is being made. The question is, will we answer. I will, for one, answer for health care reform for America.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. POE of Texas addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. KAPTUR addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. JONES addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

PAYING TRIBUTE TO STACY PALMER-BARTON

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. TURNER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. TURNER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to my long-time

staff member and dear friend, Stacy Barton, as she departs from her distinguished service to the United States Congress.

Stacy has served as my chief of staff for four terms as the Representative from Ohio's Third Congressional District. She has served the people of my community with great enthusiasm and unrivaled commitment, and will be missed by all who have had the honor of working with her.

Stacy grew up in Calvert County, Maryland, where her grandparents owned a tobacco farm. She attended both Northern Middle and Northern High schools, later enrolling at St. Mary's College to major in psychology and sociology.

After beginning her graduate studies at the University of Delaware, Stacy enrolled in a fellowship program through the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation. It was then that she began her Hill career, serving the distinguished Member from Washington, D.C., ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON.

Following her fellowship, Stacy remained in Representative NORTON's office for another year before leaving the Hill.

She later served as the director of government relations for a firm with a focus on urban development, representing clients such as the U.S. Conference of Mayors.

I first met Stacy in her work with the U.S. Conference of Mayors and for the City of Dayton, Ohio.

Stacy formed her own lobbying firm, the Barton Company, in January 1999, advocating for many mayors throughout the country. She served as the city of Dayton's Washington, D.C., office when I served as the mayor of Dayton.

In 2002, Stacy closed her firm to serve as chief of staff in my Congressional office on the seventh floor of the Longworth House office building. She served with great distinction and, at times, has been the only African American chief of staff to a Republican Member in either the House or the Senate. It has been suggested that Stacy Barton may be the first female African American to serve as chief of staff to a Republican Member of the House. And I dare say that she probably is the only staffer from ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON's office to serve as chief of staff to a Republican Member of Congress.

As is often the case with life on the hill, Stacy's public service has come with many personal sacrifices, including spending a great deal of time away from her husband, Lee, and her two incredible children, Morgan and Miles.

In addition to the battles fought daily on Capitol Hill, Stacy has lived with multiple sclerosis, cared for her mother who was diagnosed with cancer, and raised a daughter with autism.

Stacy and I have worked together for over 10 years. Stacy, as you leave the seventh floor of Longworth this evening, I owe you my sincere thanks and gratitude for your friendship and for your counsel.